

# Sustainable Values as Social Constants

By Daniel Raphael, PhD

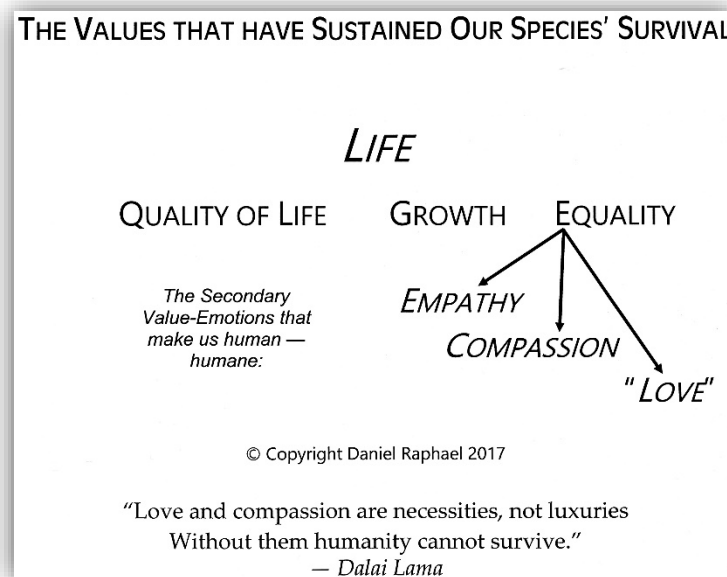
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April 4, 2018

The seven values illustrated below have sustained the survival of the Homo sapiens species from the earliest of times and are similar in function as mathematical and geometric constants.

A **mathematical constants** are special numbers that arise in many areas of mathematics, with constants such as Archimedes constant  $\pi$ , Euler's number  $e$ , and Pythagoras' constant  $\sqrt{2}$  occurring in such diverse contexts as geometry, number theory, and calculus.

[Wikipedia. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mathematical\\_constant#Euler's\\_number\\_e](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mathematical_constant#Euler's_number_e) ]



Reviewing the literature of ethics, ethical values cited as honesty, transparency, loyalty, and fairness, for example, vary remarkably from one ethicist to another. They vary because they originate from the ethicist as interpretations of the seven values in the illustration above.

**Social Axioms.** Because of the characteristics of these seven values, described below, we can use these values similarly as constants and axioms are used in geometry to provide "proofs" for ethical values. "Fairness," for example, is a true ethical value because it is based on *equality*, which provides for the potential of *growth* in the individual. Proving that, we can postulate that fairness will

engender confidence in those who receive fair treatment, which in turn provides an improved *quality of life* for the individual. For organizations, whether corporations, fraternal, sororal, and service organizations, or foundations and governments, these seven values provide the proof, or validation of their organizational ethics statements.

**The proof that these seven values are social constants** lies within our own personal human behavior, just as they have for over 8,000 generations. The four primary values, (Life, quality of life, growth, and equality), are the decision-making criteria that have assured the survival of our species, our inventiveness, and the progress of societies and civilizations. <sup>1</sup> Consider the following —

**LIFE, the Ultimate Value**, is the pivotal element of the other six values that create an integral and synergistic system of values. Decisions made about life are qualified by the other six values as the criteria for human decision-making. They are the highest sustainable values of human existence and proof of our humanity.

**Quality of Life**. While life is fundamental to survival and continued existence, it is the *quality of life* that makes life worth living and gives life meaning. In a democracy, access to the *quality of life* is provided when a person not only has an *equal* right to *life*, but that person also has an *equal* right to *growth* as anyone else. This is what makes immigrants so excited to move to a democracy — they seek freedom to experience the *quality of life* that makes life worth living — to control their own destiny and to explore their innate potential with the opportunities that a democratic nation provides.

**Growth** is essential for improving our quality of life. To be human is to strive to grow into our innate potential. Our yearning to grow ensures that our innate potential becomes expressed and fulfilled, and collectively encourages an improving quality of life for everyone that results in social progress. This value ensures that the inherent potential of individuals, societies, and a civilization becomes expressed and fulfilled, which encourages an improving quality of life for everyone. Without growth, there would be no possibility of social evolution and social sustainability. <sup>2</sup>

**Equality** is inherent in the value of life. We give equal value to each individual, and we would seek to provide more equitable opportunity to every individual to develop their innate potential, as we would our own. Even those with less potential than others have equal value to live life to explore, develop, and express the potential they do have. Without equality, life is a competition where the resources of one's living-potential can be squandered in competitive warlike existence. Then there is no moral equity available.

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<sup>1</sup> Raphael, Daniel 2018 *ORGANIC MORALITY, Answering the Critically Important Moral Questions of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Millennium*. See Chapter 3, p 27.

A free downloadable PDF from <https://sites.google.com/view/danielraphael>

<sup>2</sup> Raphael, Daniel 2017 *Understanding Social Sustainability*. <https://sites.google.com/view/danielraphael>

**Characteristics of these Values.** When we dig farther into these values and examine them in the light of the 200,000 year history of the Homo sapiens species something far more remarkable is revealed.

**Self-Evident** — The self-evident nature of these values is only one of several characteristics that have obscured their presence while in plain sight. The three primary values are self-evident similarly as those stated in the famous sentence of the United States Declaration of Independence, *“We hold these truths (values) to be self-evident, that all [people] are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.”* The proof of this becomes evident when people around the world are asked whether they would like to enjoy an improved quality of life, as they define it.

**Universal** — These values are also universal to all people of all races, cultures, ethnicity, nations, and genders. Ask anyone, whether they live in Bangladesh or Baltimore, Houston or Hanoi, or any other city if they would like to develop the innate potential they brought into life ... to improve their quality of life with an equal ability as anyone else would or could. The answers are universally the same whether a poor person is asked or a multi-billionaire. Everyone I have talked to as a holistic life coach has chosen to improve the quality of their life, and grow into their potential.

**Irreducible** — The three primary values are the superordinate values of our species and are not subordinate to any other values. The pursuit of an improving quality of life, growth, and equality provide the foundation for human motivation,<sup>3</sup> as interpreted by the individual, and express themselves in a personal hierarchy of needs.

**Organic / Innate / Timeless** — Even though I cannot prove it, evidence seems to suggest that these seven values are organic to our species and have been embedded in our DNA from our earliest beginnings. They have motivated us, everyone, to yearn for the improvement of our quality of life materially and socially. We can safely predict that these same values will continue to motivate our species to enjoy an ever-improving quality of life, and to grow into our innate potential in future centuries and millennia.

**The three secondary value-emotions** are also organic to our species and exist in us as an impulse to do good. They are proof that people are innately good. For example, we want peace for others as much as we want peace for ourselves because we are wired with the values that make us human – humane.

The reason that we are so sensitive to issues of equality is that we have the innate capacity of *empathy* – to “feel” or put our self in the place of another and sense what that is like, whether that is in anguish or in joy. Feeling that, we want to act in *compassion*<sup>4</sup> – to reach out to the other and assist them in their plight.

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<sup>3</sup> Raphael, *ORGANIC MORALITY* ...., p 79

<sup>4</sup> <http://ccare.stanford.edu/stanford-compassionate-university-project/>

Our motivation for equality is stimulated when we compare our own life to that of others and see that the quality of their life is “better” or worse than our own. Our sense of inequality then rises within us to motivate us to seek equality for us, and equality for them stimulated by our empathy and compassion for them.

We generalize empathy and compassion toward all of humanity with the term “Love” – the capacity to care for another person or all of humanity, as we would for our self.

**Conclusion.** Because these seven values are innate to our species, they provide for an organic morality that supports interpreted ethical values. Not surprisingly, these seven values and concomitant ethical values offer the potential to assign metric values to behavioral outcomes of individuals and organizations, when the full range of relationship responsibilities are known. <sup>5</sup>

Because values always underlie all decision-making, these values initiate a progression that clarifies our understanding of our ethical statements:

7 Organic Values	Interpreted Values	Beliefs and Assumptions	Expectations	Measurable Performance
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The instrument on pages 50-53 of *ORGANIC MORALITY* provides a much more definitive process of self-assessment for moral and ethical performance. The final validation is revealed when measurable performance behaviors are cross-checked with the seven ultimate values. Doing so, users can discover what is ethical and universal for all time, without interpretations or opinions.



BIO: Daniel Raphael is an independent and original thinker who is a Viet Nam veteran; with 18 years experience working in adult felony criminal corrections; father of three and grandfather of three children; former volunteer fireman, small business owner, inventor, manufacturer of a household sewing machine product; self-taught theologian; holistic life coach and principal of Daniel Raphael Consulting since 2003; author and publisher of numerous books, papers, and articles. Daniel enjoys public speaking and has taught social sustainability and spirituality classes and workshops nationally and internationally and is well prepared to enlighten and entertain you.

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{1484 words, inclusively.}

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<sup>5</sup> Raphael, *ORGANIC MORALITY*, Chpt 5, “81 Degrees of Socially Sustainable Moral Decision-Making,” p 43